

January-July, 2006:

PERFORMANCE REPORT

for the Department of Correction





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Commissioner
Indiana Department of Correction**

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The following bullet points reflect the more significant improvements, new initiatives, policy changes, and other accomplishments made within the Indiana Department of Correction during the first half of 2006. If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact me directly, or Randy Koester at 232-5711.

- To enhance the level of professionalism among correctional staff, new standards are being enforced that include pre-employment drug screening, and periodic criminal background checks on all correctional employees. To attract additional quality employees, the Department successfully proposed to Indiana's General Assembly a change in law that recognizes the hazardous duty assignments undertaken by correctional employees, and paves the way for better benefits and compensation for all DOC facility staff, parole officers, and emergency response team members.
- In order to implement much needed repairs and renovations to several of Indiana's older prisons, the Department successfully brokered a contract that, at no added cost to taxpayers, brought in a national vendor to make improvements to facility heating, air conditioning, ventilation, lighting, and other conditions of confinement. The vendor would be paid only from a percentage of the \$38.1 million savings estimated from more efficient utility operations over the course of the ten year agreement. Improvements include installation of new boilers to be fueled by Indiana corn, which not only burns cleaner, it supports Indiana's economic growth instead of relying on foreign fuel sources. This change will also put more offenders to work, by having them stoke boilers, and handle corn storage and movement.

- Opened the first stand alone adult prison facility devoted to using novel transition programs designed to better prepare offenders for reintegration into their Indiana communities upon completion of their ordered term of imprisonment. This facility, called the Plainfield Reentry Education Center, is operating on the site of the former Indiana Boy's School (a.k.a. Plainfield Juvenile Correctional Facility), and will provide oversight and correctional services to offenders preparing for return to the eight Central Indiana counties that surround the prison. By better preparing offenders for the responsibilities they will face as free citizens, and by matching them up with community resources and supervision they require, improved public safety should be realized, as fewer offenders return to a life of crime.
- Instead of continuing to house minimum-security offenders in medium security facilities with an average per day cost per inmate of \$57.69, a formal procurement process was used to identify outside partners willing to house more than 300 offenders in a work release setting at an average cost of \$39 per day. These work release beds provide a step down transition for offenders returning to the community, and allows them to build a savings that will help support them (and their families) following release.
- Began using offenders to process and repackage foods, and grow vegetables to support Lieutenant Governor Skillman's Feed Indiana's Hungry (a.k.a. the "FI\$H") program.
- Launched a new web site that lists pictures and identifying information on the fugitives most wanted by the IDOC. Included on this site are offenders who have escaped from secured confinement as well as those who have failed to appear at scheduled meetings with parole. This site serves as a useful tool for the Department's Parole Sources Division, but also assists local probation, law enforcement and federal authorities to identify those individuals that may need to be removed from the streets before they engage in additional crimes. This site is found at www.in.gov/indcorrection/wanted.
- A new offender "Hot line" has been activated at each juvenile facility that offers inmates a direct line of communication to Internal Affairs Investigators at Central Office by merely dialing a special number on their offender payphones. This should dissuade staff misconduct while improving the timeliness upon which critical events or conditions that might threaten an inmate's safety or facility security are reported. A video was produced that explains to juveniles how to use this Hot Line, and signs have been installed for that purpose.

- Developed a 112 page Directory entitled “Inside the Walls of the Indiana Department of Correction: a Reference Directory for Judges” that was delivered to all courts in Indiana with criminal jurisdiction. This Directory, for the first time, provides to the courts a comprehensive review of the correctional process, and provides to judges the points of contact they can use to receive timely, meaningful and accurate information about the Department, and the offenders they send through the state correctional process.
- To enhance the beauty of Indiana’s landscape to visitors attending the NCAA Final Four Basketball event in Indianapolis, over a seven week period minimum-security offenders worked more than 50,000 hours cleaning roadsides across the State of Indiana. They picked up nearly a million gallons of trash, and countless tires and other large debris. Following this initiative, and at the request of Senator Arlene Rogers and Mayor Rudy Clay, the focus has shifted to the City of Gary, where work crews from three area DOC facilities are helping clean up roadways, vacant lots and green spaces within that community.
- In the past, when courts approved offenders for placement in local Community Transition Programs (“CTP”), they were transported by DOC back to their county of sentence one offender at a time. Two years ago the law was changed to allow DOC to wait up to a week to transport offenders to their CTP assignment, but despite this change in law, no corresponding change in practice was implemented by the Department. Now CTP transportation is conducted only two days per week to allow for more efficient transportation of multiple offenders at the same time, and to make it easier on local CTP programs preparing to receive offenders.
- Working with “Wheels for the World” ministries founder Joni Eareckson Tada, offenders at the maximum-security Pendleton Correctional Facility have begun repairing and restoring wheelchairs for those in need.
- Hosted a statewide Suicide Prevention Summit, which brought state and national experts in to guide more than 300 employees of corrections, county jails, law enforcement and other government and private organizations on the warning signs and effective responses to be given to those who are incarcerated or receiving institutionalized treatment.
- Previously the process for awarding Community Correction grant dollars was subjective and inefficient as little attention was paid to performance. With the help of the Office of Budget Management, a new, more objective formula was developed for awarding community corrections grants to counties. Awards are now based

upon performance, evidenced based practices, and numbers of inmates to be diverted from the Department. Each of the 68 counties participating in the grant program received funding; however, for the first time some counties experienced a reduction in funding due to their failure to meet expectations. Staff met with Program Directors and other officials from those counties to explain why and how performance was measured, and offer guidance for program improvement.

- The Department hosted the first ever joint Superintendents/Wardens meeting at Jeffersonville, Indiana, that brought together prison facility heads and DOC Executive Staff members from Kentucky and Indiana to share ideas and experiences. The meeting touched on a variety of correctional topics of mutual interest, including suicide prevention, management of harassment and discrimination complaints, emergency response operations, ethics training, and the use of new technologies.
- Instead of only 5% of the offender population having to submit to a random drug test each month the number of tests is doubling to 10% to apply greater pressure on offenders wishing to traffick and use drugs in prison. To help police for trafficking and other criminal offenses in prison, a State Police Detective was detailed to Central Office to assist the Department's Internal affairs Division on matters relating to criminal investigations. This direct involvement should also lead to speedier prosecutions of criminal cases.
- The Department of Correction invited all members of Indiana's General Assembly to a "Legislative Day" hosted at the New Castle Correctional Facility. This meeting offered lawmakers, as well as reporters and local officials, the opportunity to view the services being provided to the Department of Correction by third-party contracting; including the management and operations of the facility, offender health care, prison food services.
- In the past the Department utilized a different offender handbook at each of its 31 facilities. To reduce confusion and promote standardization and more efficient use of resources, I have called for only two types of handbooks; one for adult offenders and one for juveniles. Each facility can devise a one-page supplement that outlines processes unique to their facility that offenders can find in facility libraries to supplement their handbooks.
- The Department's prison industries division (PEN Products) announced its new website: www.penproducts.com. The new site

allows for easy electronic procurement for both state agencies and private companies. The site will serve as an e-commerce resource for Indiana businesses investing in quality offender-made goods.

- After helping instill a new and improved web-based electronic application for all sheriffs to utilize in registering sex offenders, the Department accepted oversight responsibility for statewide registry monitoring, and for sheriff training. The Department proposed a change in law to support this, and several other changes to the sex offender registration process, including a requirement that sex offenders participate in treatment or risk losing any accumulated credit time for good behavior.
- In the past many juvenile facilities place restrictions on visitation, such as allowing one family member per week to visit their incarcerated child. Changes were made, and continue to evolve that encourages more visitation and greater family involvement in their son/daughters rehabilitation.
- Working with the Boy Scouts of America, the Department is developing troops with juvenile facilities. This initiative will help instill good social skills, and a strong value system among participating juveniles. Related to this is a project for adult offenders at certain facilities to help build, using donated resources, over 30,000 bird house kits that scouts across the state will use to earn a merit badge.
- The Department has partnered with its food service vendor to offer a new vocation program called the "Inmate to Workmate" program. This job skills program prepares offenders for certification as a safe food handler, which will better prepare them for employment after corrections.
- Certain mentally ill offenders displaying misbehavior were being assigned to long-term disciplinary segregation. Mental health evaluations have been conducted, and many of these offenders have been removed from disciplinary status and placed into psychiatric treatment units.
- Implemented a change in the Department's visitation policy. In the past, staff and volunteers were prohibited from maintaining contact with offenders after their release. This practice interfered with important follow-up by volunteers (many of them members of the faith community) during the critical period of time immediately following release. Now these volunteers can continue to work with offenders as they transition back to their community.

